

EXTREME COLD WEATHER

The National Weather Service reports 26 Americans died due to cold weather in 2017. Prolonged exposure to bitterly cold conditions can increase the chances of suffering from illnesses such as frostbite and hypothermia. Practicing safety and understanding the warning signs of cold weather illnesses can help decrease the danger of severe winter weather.

COLD WEATHER SAFETY

Cold weather can be extremely dangerous if Hoosiers are not prepared.

- Stay indoors as much as possible and try to minimize travel.
- If alternative heating sources such as space heaters are used, follow the manufacturer's instructions and turn it off before going to bed or leaving home.
- To prevent the likelihood of carbon monoxide poisoning and other hazards, never use ovens as an alternative heating source. [Click here for additional information about safe alternative heat methods.](#)
- If working outdoors, take frequent breaks in a warm shelter, work in groups, drink warm beverages – but avoid caffeinated drinks – and eat high-calorie foods.
- Never leave animals, especially pets, outside without adequate shelter. Bring them into a warm area and make sure their water is not frozen.
- If traveling cannot be avoided, create a vehicle emergency kit in case of an accident or becoming stranded.

HYPOTHERMIA/FROSTBITE SYMPTOMS

Symptoms and those who are more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite can vary based on age, health, diet and amount of outdoor activity. Individuals suffering from one of these illnesses can show all or a few of the following symptoms:

- Uncontrolled shivering
- Slurred speech
- Clumsy movements
- Fatigue
- Confused behavior
- Discoloration of the skin
- Numbness
- Swollen face

POWER OUTAGES

During extremely cold weather it is crucial to dress appropriately, whether spending time outside or indoors.

- A hat
- A scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
- Sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- Insulated and waterproof mittens
- Thermal underwear
- Several layers of loose-fitting, thermal wear or material that “wicks” moisture off the skin
- A water-resistant or tightly woven coat
- Two layers of socks with boots or shoes that are waterproof and have a flexible sole
- A robe or jacket
- Slippers

